

## HISTORY OF COUNTY AND REGIONAL LIBRARIES

### CUSTER COUNTY LIBRARY

Custer, South Dakota

Mrs. Ruth Van Overscheld, Librarian

A Library for Custer at some future date was the aim of the Custer Woman's Civic Club when it organized in 1926. Their immediate project was the building of a Community Hall. Therefore nothing could be done for several years toward establishing a Library. Late in 1929, however, action was taken on it. A Library Committee was appointed to find a place. Each member was asked to bring one or more books to the next meeting of the club. These books and the ones purchased with money donated at the Annual Civic Club Birthday Party put the project on its way. Our Library opened in the Jury Room of the Court House on March 15, 1930. Since there were no regular funds on which to depend, the ladies took turns acting as librarian.

There were many "growing pains" during the library's infancy. The Custer County Bank offered a room in back where the library was located for a time. Later it was moved to the "White School." Here the Manual Training Class built shelves for the books. With WPA from 1935 to 1939, funds were available for the salary of the Librarian and other operating costs. When these funds were no longer available in 1939, the Club again became responsible for expenses. There were 1588 books registered at this time.

In 1940 it was found there was a possibility of a County Library and we worked toward attaining it. In 1942 the Club finished the basement of the Community Building with a room built especially to house the Library. The cost of heating, lights, janitor service and salary of a Librarian, though small, remained a problem. As the Custer County Library, in 1946, it was moved to the completed City Hall. The Library has been well patronized since its establishment. It has been capably managed for many years by Mrs. Ruth Van Overscheld and an assistant, Florence McKenna. The active Library Board currently consists of Mrs. May Delicate,

Mrs. Fred Pelts, Mr. Roland Johnson, Mr. Charles Pringle, and Mr. Donald H. Scheuer.

Current plans call for moving the Library into larger quarters in the City Hall when they become available. While the County supports the Library it will be necessary that the Civic Club still provide aid.

Besides the Main Library in Custer, there are eleven sub-stations which make the books and magazines available, within a short distance, to anyone in the County. It now has between fourteen and fifteen thousand books on its shelves, which provide a varied choice in selection to its many patrons. It has outgrown the present space and we anxiously await new library quarters.

-Mrs. Leland Willis and Donald H. Scheuer, Chairman

### HAND COUNTY LIBRARY

Miller, South Dakota

Kathryn Nelson, Librarian

Judging from the records, Miller librarians of yesteryear had the same overdue and lost book headaches as librarians of today. Perhaps they had a more infallible way of handling the problem. Following is a quote from the minutes of the board meeting of April, 1899: "Moved to permit the librarian to rent books to persons not members of the Association-said persons to pay, in advance, a fee of 10 cents per book, and also to make a deposit equal to the value of the book." It is probable that few books were lost, and also that few books were borrowed on those terms.

From a shelf-full of donated books in 1899, placed on a shelf in the bakery, to the 12,000 catalogued volumes of 1961, is a capsule description of the history of the Hand County Library.

The Helen Hunt Jackson Study Club is credited with instituting the first Miller Library Association. The officers of this first organized Association were: Mrs.

Lane, president; Mm. W. H. Smith, vice-president; Mrs. Ghrist, secretary, and Mrs. Water, treasurer.

A Study Club committee had canvassed the town and found their library project acceptable to a sufficient number of citizens. They adopted a subscription library plan, with \$1 per year fee for membership. With a collection of 75 books, largely donated, the library was established rent-free in the G. C. Briggs book store. Mrs. Briggs must have been a public-spirited citizen, as a library could scarcely have added to his business as a book seller. Years later, in the minutes of 1910, I find this notation: "Mr. and Mrs. Briggs were given a vote of thanks for having charge of the library, and they will be permitted to use the books free of charge."

Growth of the book collection and the number of patrons necessitated more space. So the library was moved to a room on the second floor of the old Haud County Bank Building. This room was given rent-free for four months with the understanding that rent of \$12 per month would be paid for at least one year IF the library continued to prosper.

In July of 1915, the minutes record a bill of \$4 to the drayman for moving the library to its present location on the second floor of the city fire hall.

Names of prominent Miller citizens were added to the list of library board members down through the years-Beasom, Coquillette, Woodruff, Campbell, Fisher, Waite, Love, Halbower, McCullen, Greene, Cole, Bottcher, Bard, Redmond, Carroll, Borkhuis, Gardner, Hern, and Waters. At the time of the death of Mrs. Waters in 1953, a gift of money was made to the library in her memory by her son, Glen Waters. This was used to buy a ten-drawer section for the card catalogue. The section is marked with an engraved brass plate.

From the minutes of November 11, 1911: "Miss Floy Woodruff (the first paid librarian) was given the position of librarian for nine months for \$125-that amount being all we have to spend for that purpose."

From the minutes of February, 1912: "It was moved and carried that the presi-

dent have a talk with Miss Parry, to give her a clear understanding of the work expected. If all is found satisfactory we shall offer her a position as permanent librarian."

Miss Parry served from July, 1912, until December of that year. At that time Miss Mary Redmond was appointed librarian and she continued faithfully and conscientiously to influence the reading habits of the community for 32 years. She was feared for her firmness, respected for her sincerity, and loved in return for her genuine affection for people. In April, 1945, she regretfully resigned because of ill health. At the time of Miss Redmond's death in 1958, the Board of Trustees thought it would be fitting to have her picture hang in the library. But this modest woman must have avoided cameras. The only picture that could be found was a small snapshot with Miss Redmond in the background, and three of her brother's grandchildren having prominence in the foreground. This inadequate but characteristic picture was enlarged and hangs in our library.

The minutes through the years reveal that Miss Redmond's wages were raised from time to time. In 1917, she was paid \$30 per month. And in 1918 she was given, in addition to the \$30, two weeks paid vacation and \$12 per year to pay a janitor to help with the cleaning. During the unfortunate 1930's, a notation states that Miss Redmond accepted a reduction in salary.

Mrs. Grace Redmond, now Mrs. A. B. Cahalan, took over the library duties after Miss Redmond's retirement. She served until 1947.

In 1948, the Miller library became the Hand County Library, with seven stations throughout the county. This change was brought about in part *through* the efforts of the first county librarian, Mrs. Ruth Gardner. She served as a dedicated librarian until December, 1953, when ill health forced her retirement. One of her many contributions to the success of the library was the institution of the Vacation Reading program. This project has continued to grow and has become a vital part of this library's services.

Mrs. Gardner passed away in 1954. In her memory a Mary Ruth Gardner memorial fund was presented to the library by her husband and members of the family. Books purchased with this money have been placed on a special Ruth Gardner shelf.

Another memorial honoring Mrs. Ruff, a pioneer teacher, was presented to the library by her former pupils. This was used for a new light fixture installed over the librarian's desk.

There is also a special shelf containing books presented yearly by the Miller P.E.O. Organization.

In 1956, Mr. Howard E. Hem, then chairman of the Board of Trustees, received the citation as the state's outstanding trustee, at the S.D.L.A. convention at Vermillion.

Mrs. Kathryn Nelson was appointed as librarian following Mrs. Gardner's retirement and has served in that post for the past seven years.

Mr. Carl Speirs, long active member of the Board of Trustees, was elected chairman of that board in January of 1960. Mr. Speirs spent some time in Pierre during the recent legislative session working for bills helpful to library progress in South Dakota. Mr. and Mrs. Speirs also have charge of the library station at Ree Heights.

The present efficient board of trustees is composed of Mr. Carl W. Speirs, chairman; Mrs. Winifred Lorentson; Mrs. Evangeline Dennis, Mrs. Mable Noe, and Mr. Ruben Widmayer. They are at present working along with other organizations to procure a new location for our "overloaded" library. We have high hopes that a new chapter is soon to be written into the history of the Hand County Library in the form of suitable and adequate library quarters.

## **HYDE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Highmore, South Dakota  
Nellie Rudd, Librarian

The town of Highmore was founded in

1882. For 33 years the community struggled along without any library facilities. In 1915 the Civic League of Highmore was formed and one of the first steps taken by that new organization was to sponsor a Free Public Library. A "Book Party" was held to which each guest brought one or more books for the infant library. A total of 112 books was donated which was the nucleus of the present library.

The Civic League continued to operate the library until 1919. During this period members of the League donated their services and served as librarians. Mrs. Edith Cornell acted as head librarian and was assisted by Mrs. Marie Drew, Mrs. Ella Quirk, Mrs. Grace Noel, Mrs. Nettie Sussex and others.

In 1919 petitions were circulated throughout the county for the formation of a County Library as authorized by the County Library Law, which had recently been enacted by the State Legislature. In September of 1919 the Hyde County Commissioners approved the petition and voted a one-half mill levy for the support of a County Library. Thus Hyde County became the first to take advantage of the County Library Law and the Hyde County Public Library is the oldest county library in the State. The Board of County Commissioners at the time consisted of Martin Bouzek, Oscar Olson, Ole Lee, C. P. Swanson and John Weber. Library trustees on the first library board appointed by the commissioners were James Buchan, Edith Cornell, John Weber, Nellie Hays and W. B. Hamlin.

When the County Library was formed the Civic League turned over its entire collection of books and library equipment to the County.

Since the start of the library it has been served by nine librarians. The first was Edith Cornell. She was followed by Luta Huston, Miss Hulce, Ruby Mauch, Erma Lenau, Coila York, Grace Noel, Isadore Brooking and the present librarian, Nellie Rudd who is assisted by Elsie Webb.

The present Library Board consists of the following members: R. J. Drew, Chairman; Blanche Ashdown, Dorothy June

Cline, Bertha Christensen and Bernard Brewer. From point of service the oldest member of the board is Blanche Ashdown, who has served continuously since 1931.

From its modest beginning in 1915 with 112 volumes the Hyde County Public Library has expanded to its present size with approximately 17,000 volumes. The population of Hyde County is less than 3,000 and the circulation of library books averages about 2,500 volumes per month. The people of the County are appreciative of and make use of their free library facilities.

## POTTER COUNTY LIBRARY

Gettysburg, South Dakota  
Mrs. Edna Shroyer, Librarian

On April 21, 1923 a county Library Committee was appointed from the Potter County Education Association to work on the plan for a County Library. The Gettysburg Women's Literary Club also appointed a committee to cooperate with the committee from the Education Association. Petitions were circulated in the taxing districts in the county and had to be signed by 90 per cent of the voters at the last election for Governor. This petition was then presented to the County Commissioners. A tax levy was made and a County Library Board of five was then appointed by the County Commissioners.

The opening of the new Library was November 22, 1924. The Library planned to start circulation of books at this date, but the Library Board was advised by the Superintendent of the Board of Health to postpone to a later date, due to the smallpox epidemic. December 1, 1924 therefore was the date of opening with Marian Weidensee as the first librarian. Gradually books were catalogued and shelved. From June 1924 to June 1925 approximately 1,195 books were added. The compilation of registration statistics from June 1, 1925 to May 1, 1926 totaled 932.

In April 1925, five stations were established and were under direct supervision of the central Library. These stations were located in Tolstoy, Forest City, Gorman, Hoven and Lebanon. The station at Forest City was in operation from April 1925 to

July 1928. The station at Gorman was open until January 1929.

Monthly collections were sent to the stations for a period of three months. Approximately 200 books are available to the patrons at all times. Prior to 1939, the Library was operated through a budget, which had been levied for each year in the County, 'but during the past five or six years the County was unable to collect enough taxes to appropriate a sufficient budget to operate the Library successfully. It had come to a condition where the workers, Librarians, and staff, were paid in warrants and they were unable to cash them because of the large amount of overdraft in the Library funds. With public demand to keep the Library doors open, the commissioners asked for the aid from the Works Progress Administration. This aid was made available and the workers were under the supervision of a state-wide Library project supervisor and the South Dakota Library Commission. The appropriation for 1939 and 1940 was used to pick up the back registered warrants.

Among those who have served on the Potter County Free Public Library Board in the past years are: A. L. Thelin, Mrs. M. E. McGinity, Charles Alexander, Harry Westphal, Irene Artz, and Lilla Setzer,

The present Board of 1958 and 1959 consists of Alpha Lake, President; Ida Heron, Vice President; Margaret Simon, Treasurer; Rose Claussen, Maud Hinkley with Vesta Wickersham acting as Secretary.

The Librarians, assistant Librarians and Custodians through the intervening years were Marian Wiedensee, Clara Van Abel, Horace Manfull, Marian Mann, Buelah (Gidley) Klein, Laura Shawgo, Helen Moore, Lois Reingaard and perhaps others, and at the present time Vesta Wickersham, who was elected October 10, 1955,

As to date we have 5,722 new and renewal registered borrowers. 15,497 books have been accessioned through the years and the Library receives approximately 40 magazines and periodicals. The circulation of books and periodicals for 1957 was 10,268, besides the great amount of reference work done at the Library each day.

The Library serves 25 rural teachers. Each teacher borrows a collection of books for the school each month. The public schools of Potter County including Gettysburg, Lebanon, and Tolstoy have access to the library, also the Hoven school.

The county Extension clubs, Literary and Study Clubs depend on the Library for material necessary for their club work.

The Library hours are Monday through Friday, 10 AM to 5 PM. It is open on Saturdays from 9 AM to 12 noon.

Miss Vesta Wickersham passed away on April 1, 1961. Miss MacKay met with the Potter County Library Board and Mrs. Edna Shroyer was elected our new librarian. On June 5, 1961, Miss MacKay sent Mrs. Lillian Dennis from the State Library Commission to supervise and do reorganization of the Library. Mrs. Francis Becker, Mrs. Shroyer and Miss Darla Hicks of Gettysburg assisted. After six weeks the work was completed except for local staff completing the card catalog.

## TRIPP COUNTY LIBRARY

Winner, South Dakota  
Miss M. Bernice Overton, Librarian

Tripp County's library, located in Winner, was the second county library established in South Dakota. It began service to the people of Tripp County on September 1, 1921. The Women's Club of Winner was the guiding hand behind this project. Most of the women in Tripp County, under the direction of the club, presented to the county commissioners more than the necessary number of certified petitions from each legal voter in each township for the establishing of a county library.

On May 3, 1921, the county commissioners appointed Mrs. R. L. Tindale, Mrs. O. E. Farnsworth, Mrs. H. Hazzard, D. C. Bond, and J. G. Mackaman as members of the first Tripp County Library Board of Trustees. The board elected Mrs. Kathryn Evans to be the first librarian at their May 17, 1921, meeting.

The library was located on the second floor of the courthouse until 1926. At that

time, it was moved to its present location on the first floor in the southwest corner. Here hours of the library were 8:30 to 12:00, and 1:00 to 5:30, and one hour each evening. During the first two months, 200 books were circulated to 174 patrons and 64 cents in fines was collected.

The budget of Tripp County Library has shown an indication of the financial status of the county. During the "good" years, appropriations are generous; during the "bad" years, appropriations are low. For the 1922-23 fiscal year, the budget was \$5,000 and remained near this same amount for several years. During the depression years, appropriations dropped, with \$2,439.87 in 1933-34 being the lowest. The following budgets show a gradual increase each year. For the 1945-46 fiscal period, Tripp County Library received \$6,000 and the present appropriations are \$11,365.

Circulation records of any library are a reflection of the interest and pride that the people have in their library. Tripp County Library records 92,322 in 1932 as the highest circulation in the 40-year history of the library. The population of the county at that time was approximately 11,712. While serving a population of 9,937 in 1940, the library circulated 83,743 books and magazines. The 1960 circulation was 60,375 to a population of 8,761.

Branch libraries have been a part of the library service in Tripp County from its beginning. By the end of the 1923-24 fiscal period, there were 15 branches and stations established. At no time has there been more than fifteen, with nine the most consistent number of active branches. Presently there are five branches operating. If a community can provide a suitable and adequate location and an interested custodian, the Board of Trustees will agree to establishing a branch library in their locality.

In the fall of 1928, Mrs. Evans extended the services of Tripp County Library by loaning books in quantity to the rural schools. During the first year 135 teachers made use of this service, which has been continued through the years. Each teacher may borrow eight books per pupil for a two-month period. This year there are 72

rural school teachers checking out books for their schools.

The Board hired Mrs. Caroline Evans as assistant librarian in July of 1925. Until this time, Kathryn Evans had managed with part-time help.

Members of the National Youth Administration and the Civil Works Administration were employed by the library in 1934 and 1935. They cleaned and mended books; redecorated and cleaned walls, floors and furnishings; and helped at the circulation desk.

A perpetual thorn in the side of every librarian is the problem of overdues. As an example, the Tripp County Library Board of Trustees discussed a particular case of overdue books on their meeting on April 6, 1926. A family in the county had borrowed 12 books that were due November 16, 1925. They owed \$15.48 in overdue fines, but would pay only \$1. The Board voted to ask for outside help to obtain \$10 of the amount due. Obviously this is an unusual case, but the problem of overdues and fines are unpleasant for all concerned. As in 1921, the fines at Tripp County Library are 1c a day per article.

Evening service of the library was financed by the city of Winner from 1921 to 1957. At that time the outside entrance to the library was removed because more space was needed. Now access to the library is gained by entrance through the corridors of the courthouse. Because the library would be the only office open in the evening, the library board and staff do not want to undertake the responsibility for any and all happenings in the courthouse during these hours. Therefore, there are no evening hours at the Tripp County Library now.

After being Tripp County Librarian for 30 years, Mrs. Kathryn Evans resigned in November of 1951. She is remembered by all who knew her as a wonderful person. One year later, Mrs. Evans passed away in Gresham, Oregon, where she had been living since her resignation.

M. Berniece Overton, the present Tripp County Librarian, began her duties on December 1, 1951. She <sup>had</sup> worked at this

library when she was a high school student. The present staff also includes Miss LeAnn Holden, assistant librarian, and two school girls who work part-time.

Members of the current Tripp County Library Board of Trustees are: The Reverend W. I. Snook, Winner, president; Mrs. Harold Nielsen, Winner; Mrs. James Nance, Colome; Miss Marie Lawler, Keyapaha; and M. E. Kulbel, Winner; County Commissioners representative. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of January, May, and September.

Library service to the people of Tripp County includes the following: Monday through Friday the hours of the main library are 9:30 to 5:30 for the general public; during the school year, Saturday hours are the same, but Winner grade school students are asked not to visit the library on this day, and the afternoons are reserved for teachers only; during the summer months, the library closes at noon on Saturday.

Every third Thursday, Miss Overton visits the Witten Public School with a number of books that can be checked out by the school children or adults in the community. Lack of a branch library in this area makes this necessary.

Locations and custodians of the five Tripp County Branch Libraries are:

Colome-Lewis's Furniture Store, Mrs. Roy Lewis.

Hamill-Hamill Grocery Store, Carl Lindholm.

Keyapaha-Lawler's Store, Miss Marie Lawler.

Millboro- Millboro Grocery Store, Rose Carter.

Wewela-Barcus's Service Station, Mrs. Elmer Barcus.

Books are loaned in quantity to the schools in the county. Filmstrips are available to be checked out by schools and organizations. An outside book depository is located by the west door of the courthouse so patrons may return books after hours.

Summer reading clubs are sponsored for the grade school students. Last summer the library joined the Library Club of America. Students in the fourth through the eighth grades may earn their membership pin, honor membership pin and life membership pin by reading and reporting on eighteen books. Fifty-eight readers are enrolled in the Tripp County Library Club of America.

Story Hour is held every Friday at 10:00 A.M. during the months of June, July, and August. Mrs. Embert Mann is returning as story-teller this year. Approximately 80 kindergarten, first-, second-, and third grade students enrolled last summer.

To give efficient service to the people of Tripp County has been and will continue to be the purpose of this library. Significant progress has been made during the first 40 years, but there is now a need for additional space and expansion of the present facilities.

Tripp County Library was established by civic-minded people who believed in and worked for this public institution. With the future-minded people continuing to work for the library, Tripp County Library is looking forward to another period of growth in the coming years.

## **NORTHWEST REGIONAL LIBRARY**

Belle Fourche, South Dakota  
Mrs. Iona A. Shevling, Librarian

Since the early 1900's the town of Belle Fourche tried to give library service for the whole Tri-State area. Women dedicated to this service provided books and magazines for ranchers and rural schools, as well as for the children and adults of the town itself. Therefore, in 1956, when the Library Services Act passed Congress, women took immediate action to see that Belle Fourche would be named one of the regional libraries. They agreed to provide adequate housing for such a library. Letters from organized groups poured into Pierre., promising cooperation in establishing the library, and support after it was established.

According to the plan submitted by the State Library Commission, a demonstration was set up, and in July, 1957, Butte County, South Dakota became the second in the United States to participate in this nation-wide project. Miss Mercedes MacKay, State Librarian, selected books and materials, and made plans for equipping and staffing the library. Federal and State funds were used. Plans were made for moving both the city and regional libraries to a larger building in a new location. Mrs. Lone Shevling was hired as librarian, and she began work on September 1, 1957. Temporary headquarters were set up in Library Hall, the rear part of the Belle Fourche Public Library. Rural schools of the county were located, maps made, routes and schedules set up for bookmobile travel. On October 9, Justus H. Westby brought the first bookmobile from Pierre with a load of books, and on October 15 the first day's route was covered. Mr. Westby was driver. Miss MacKay, Miss Charlene Vares, Bookmobile librarian, and Mrs. Shevling introduced the service to the people.

A branch was established at Newell, with the cooperation of the Library Board. New quarters were obtained, decorated and outfitted with new furniture and shelving. Books from the Regional Library were added, and part-time personnel provided. During the winter, all library employees received on-the-job training, and also completed a course in Children's Literature, extended from Black Hills Teachers College.

Meanwhile, members of the steering committee worked on plans for the establishment of a permanent library. Assisting were Alfred J. Burke, Reggie Long, George Didow, Harry Stephen, Claude Olson, Robert Davis, Mrs. Herman Shipley, DeWitt Malvin and George Erickson. Miss Dorette Darling and Miss Mercedes MacKay of the State Library Commission worked hard, as did members of the sponsoring Belle Fourche Library Board. On April 22, 1958, a temporary Regional Board was set up, with Alfred Burke as chairman and Mrs. Shevling as secretary. These officers were to plan meeting dates and a set of by-laws. It was suggested that Harding County appoint people to serve on

the temporary board. Those appointed were Mrs. Cather Clanton, John B. Catron, Claude E. Olson, Donald Stearns, and Lloyd Gilbert. Mrs. Alice Jacobs was added to the library staff to help organize Harding County.

In May, 1958, petitions were signed by Butte County residents requesting the County Commissioners to appoint a County Library Board, and to levy a 1 mill tax to support a county library. That board, appointed in July, included Alfred Burke, Mrs. Shipley, Mrs. Marion Rathbun, Robert S. Davis and K. L. Arthur.

Harding County residents requested a demonstration, which was started June 1, 1958. A branch library was set up at Buffalo, with Mrs. Lyndel Peterson as part-time librarian. Bookmobile routes were set up and library service extended to both counties. Upon proper petition by the residents, the County Commissioners set up their tax levy and appointed a County Library Board in June, 1959. Members: Mrs. Vernon McCoid, Mrs. Esther Wammen, Mrs. Adelaide Juelfs, Donald Stearns and Mrs. Clanton.

A demonstration of Regional Library and Bookmobile was carried on in Perkins County from June, 1959 through May, 1960, by personnel with equipment from the Northwest Regional Library.

On March 30, 1960, members of the Butte and Harding County Library Boards met and signed the contract which officially established the Northwest Regional Library. Harding County Library Board appointed Mrs. Juelfs, Mrs. Clanton, and Donald Stearns as members of the Regional Board, and Butte County Library Board appointed Alfred Burke, Mrs. Shipley, and Robert Davis. Alfred Burke was elected chairman; Mrs. Clanton, vice-chairman; and Mrs. Shevling, secretary. The Regional Board then signed contracts with the State Library Commission and with the Belle Fourche Library Board, which will supervise the regional library service.

Original plans for library location were abandoned, and new plans for remodeling and redecorating the present building were carried out. In August 1958, the Belle

Fourche Public Library moved into the east wing of the building, and the Northwest Regional Library now occupies part of the west wing. Stacks in this part of the building accommodate books for both libraries, and other facilities are used by both.

Bookmobile service to the rural people of the two counties continues on a three-weeks schedule. During the first years, poster and essay contests, exhibits and open house at various community affairs were used to arouse and stimulate interest, but growing circulation has made it difficult to carry on these extra activities. During the summer, librarians cooperate with the Belle Fourche Library in conducting weekly story hours for all the children of the area-with as many as 85 attending a session.

Serving a population of approximately 7,000, with 2,300 registered borrowers, the bookmobile circulated 38,500 books, film strips and magazines during 1960. Travel averages 1,500 miles per month. There are approximately 12,000 State-owned books now in use, and the Regional Library now owns 1,750 volumes.

Present Regional Board officers are: Vice-chairman, Mrs. Cather Clanton; Secretary, Iona A. Shevling; Treasurer, Walter B. Wenckus. The chairman, Robert S. Davis was killed in a plane crash in February. Election will take place at the annual meeting in July, 1961.

Present library personnel include Mrs. Alice Jacobs, part-time assistant; Justus Westby, driver-librarian; and Mrs. Shevling, Regional Librarian.

## **BROWN COUNTY REGIONAL LIBRARY**

Aberdeen, South Dakota

Mrs. Pearl M. Richmond, Librarian

National Library Week has been designated throughout the nation as April 17th to the 22nd. It would seem that this is an excellent time for the Brown County Regional Library to review its brief history, evaluate its worth, and to decide whether it is fulfilling its expectations.



The purposes of the Bookmobile as of March 25, 1958 were given as: First, an economical method of furnishing a large selection of books and library service to a great number of people; second, a program of this sort would make available to our young people many materials that they would not have access to otherwise; and third, this problem would produce service to our adults, not only for recreational purposes but also in gaining information relative to their needs.

A member of one of the Home Extension Clubs secured information concerning a traveling library in South Dakota. She found out that a Bookmobile could be secured if the residents of the county proved that they really wanted one. According to law, it would be under the organization and supervision of the State Library Director, Miss Mercedes MacKay of Pierre, South Dakota, while the experiment was in progress. The Bookmobile was to be purchased with Federal money, and the books were to be bought with State and Federal funds. The Bookmobile would have to operate on a regular schedule, employees would have to be hired, and a building would have to be provided for storage of the books.

The idea was adopted by various organizations, and by April 13, 1959, the following individuals were named and appointed as County Library Trustees by the County Commissioners: Welton Theil of Warner became the chairman of the Steering Committee. Mrs. Walter Kepke of Groton; Mrs. Edna Nelson Scott, Hecla; Mrs. Cora Tunby, Houghton; and Mr. Clarence Smith, Frederick, made up the committee. Every interested individual started working and continued to work until everything was completed.

On June 2, 1958, Miss Mercedes MacKay wrote that a Bookmobile had been ordered and purchased for the Brown County Project. The city of Aberdeen donated a building. After the building was cleaned by jail-prisoners, the Jaycees from the Junior Chamber of Commerce generously gave of their time and remodeled and painted it. The long awaited overhead and the Bookmobile project developed side by side as the screen of the front door to the library

practically touches some of the masonry of the bridge!

On September 22, 1958, the Brown County Regional Library Bookmobile started on its circuit. Mr. Homer Prather of Aberdeen, Charlene Vares (Now Mrs. Charles Peterson of Bismarck, North Dakota), Mrs. S. D. Richmond, and Margaret Hutchison of Aberdeen comprised the staff. Schedules were, and still are, given in the Aberdeen American News and the radio stations announce their destination every morning.

The Bookmobile was new and it contained nearly 2,500 beautiful new books each trip. A very few adult books had been used before but it was wonderful to be able to introduce those books to the patrons.

Arrangements had been made with Miss Ruth Johnson, County Superintendent of Schools, to allow the Bookmobile Librarian to explain its use to the children. Seventy stops were made during the month and services were offered to all communities in the county outside of Aberdeen proper. At the close of the first six weeks 11,500 books had been checked out and 2,700 adults and children had check-out cards.

In the meantime, Miss Vares was talking over the radio, addressing members of clubs, and PTA's. She explained its use, the cost, and the value of it to the public. Mrs. Richmond assisted at evening meetings when necessary. The Board was meeting and planning.

The Bookmobile, to be permanent, had to have petitions signed by at least 40 per cent of the people who had voted at the last election for governor in 60 per cent of the taxing districts of the county. This called for petition bearers and it meant standing on street corners during the cold weather. No one who had not worked with it, can understand the many details it included nor the wonderful co-operation we received.

On March 30, 1959, petitions bearing 7,133 signatures for the establishment of a permanent county library were presented to the Brown County Commissioners. They appointed a Library Board as follows:

Mr. Don Young of Warner, Chairman; Mrs. Preston Scott of Hecla; Mr. George Kline of Groton; Mr. Clarence Smith of Frederick; and Mrs. Cora Tunby of Houghton. Mrs. Walter Kepke of Groton and Waldon Thiel of Warner, who had worked so hard for its enactment declined to serve as they had other commitments to care for.

Miss Mercedes MacKay of Pierre, South Dakota continued her assistance until February 1, 1960 when the Library Board accepted full responsibilities. However, Miss MacKay, Director of the State Library Commission, is still having her office process the books for us and filling in with some books. Brown County staff and workers have appreciated her co-operation greatly.

The County Library has developed as we have several more substations. It assists the public libraries at Groton and Frederick and gives service to the Brentford and Andover Schools and communities. The last two mentioned are outside of county so we receive pay for this, and the money is used to secure more books for the county. We also have an arrangement with the Alexander Mitchell Library in Aberdeen so that we may borrow books which we do not have on hand.

Changes have and are occurring in the staff. Miss Vares married and moved to North Dakota. Margaret Hutchison is preparing to become a nurse, and Mrs. Richmond is moving to Arizona. Mr. Prather is the only one of the first staff to continue. Mrs. Pearl Gernar and Miss Lois Conner are the last two additions. This staff has found the work interesting and feels that the Bookmobile is a necessity in a state like ours.

During the first three months of 1961, 17,785 books had been circulated, and over 4,400 people have borrowers cards.

### **TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL LIBRARY**

Timber Lake, South Dakota

Tri-County Regional is the result of a concerted effort of individuals and organi-

zations in this area. Its establishment was the concern of library officials, County Agents, County and School Superintendents, County Commissioners, City Councils, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Tribal Council members and others vitally concerned that this area would be serviced with good reading from a bookmobile, which would have a scheduled time to stop at schools and stations.

Previous to this, interest which followed the passing of the Federal Library Services Act in 1956, the American Legion Auxiliary provided the only Public Library in Timber Lake. The Board consisted of five individuals. The library was open on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons during these years. Women and high school students gave of their time to keep the library open. The Library Board met regularly and faced three chronic problems:

How could the circulation be increased?

How could a better selection of books be obtained?

How could Timber Lake have a better library?

Food always seems to be an invitation to planning. A Library Tea was planned in September 1957 at which Miss MacKay spoke. The public meeting was held at the library to interest the citizens. Music was provided by the school children.

Miss MacKay, the State Library Director, showed a film of Bookmobile Service stops at out of the way places-rural post-offices, rural stores, a garage, a crossroad. During the discussion following, the question was raised, "Why could we not have service like that?" Then came the answer, "The Federal government realized the need for libraries in sparsely settled areas, in rural villages, in out of the way places. There was a provision if the states fulfilled the requirements whereby a demonstration might be placed in an area upon the request of the area.

Here was the hope, not just for Timber Lake, but for every section of Dewey, Corson, and Ziebach counties. Some interested people met in the Dewey County Court Room, November 22, 1957. At this

meeting Rev. Jeanie K. Sherman was asked to serve as chairman and Mrs. John Caswell as secretary. This was the beginning of the Regional Library for our region. The first meeting verified the fact that the people were very much interested. Meetings were held in communities all over the three counties. Films were shown. Miss Mercedes MacKay came again and again in order to answer the many questions and give additional information. Local people of this area, interested in this excellent library service, spoke about it at Community Clubs, City Councils, Commissioners Meetings, American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary meetings, Demonstration clubs, 4-h groups, church groups, Tribal Councils, Indian Bureaus -clubs of all kinds-here was a service for young and old; for rural and town; for those with every kind of interest.

The desire for the Demonstration grew. Through the proper channels-the Commissioners of the three counties-the formal request was made. In September of 1959, the three counties began to visualize Bookmobile, a Library Headquarters at Timber Lake, and Books.

From each county, and from the two Indian Reservations, a Regional Board was selected. There are five from each county and two from each Indian Reservation on this Board. These nineteen Board members have traveled many miles (each at his own expense) and spent hours to help others understand both the period of demonstration and the procedure for making this library permanent.

This Board is in the process of being replaced by a Tri-County Regional Board composed of three members from each county-who have been appointed by the County Library Boards of five members each-which are appointed by the County Commissioners-and one of these three members will be one of the five-member County Board. With these nine there will be two members from each of the two Indian Reservations in the area. It is through this permanent Tri-County Regional Board, all work of the established library will be handled.

September 21, 1959 was the date when the Tri-County Regional Library Bookmo-

bile moved from headquarters at Timber Lake to begin service to the people of the Tri-County Region. A small rain shower in the gumbo area north of Timber Lake gave the Bookmobile its typical initiation for a rural Bookmobile service-the Bookmobile got stuck. Operating steadily since that date, we have maintained a firm schedule of service. The area served by this Bookmobile includes about 8,500 square miles, covering Corson, Dewey, and Ziebach counties and the eastern part of Perkins County. The population in this area numbers nearly 17,500.

The average miles traveled a month is 2,080, and the average circulation was 13,704 books or an average circulation of 21 books per every mile traveled at a cost of less than 3% c per each book circulated.

Uninterrupted service of the Bookmobile has continued since September 29, 1959 on a four weeks schedule. The Bookmobile spends 11 nights away from headquarters on their schedule and is open nights in these locations: Dupree, Eagle Butte and McLaughlin at present. Other library book stations are designated stops.

The 8,000-plus book collection is appreciated by the isolated communities. Many consider this collection a better attraction than the community movie.

Tri-County personnel believe the greatest reward can often be found at the end of the roughest road.

So much to read, so much to learn, so many books to give, enjoyment for you and me.

### **TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD**

#### **Corson**

Mr. Robert Anderson, McLaughlin,  
Mr. Marion Bruce, McIntosh.  
Mrs. Elsie Rice, Thunder Hawk.  
Mr. Norman Schul, Isabel  
Mr. John Johnson, Trail City.

#### **Dewey**

Mr. Jim Buington, Timber Lake.  
Mrs. Mary Zacher, Eagle Butte  
Re J. K. Sherman, Chrm. Timber  
Lake.

Mr. Daniel Booth, Ridgeview.  
Mr. Bob Clark, Isabel.

#### Ziebach

Mr. Rex White, Glad Valley  
Mrs. Mable Ross, Dupree.  
Mrs. Norma Johnson, Dupree.  
Mr. Dick Hunter, Eagle Butte.  
Mr. W. H. Miller, Dupree.

#### Standing Rock

Mrs. Alice Grindstone, Little Eagle.  
Rev. William Faye, Wak\_pala.

#### Cheyenne

Mrs. Joe Laravec, Sec'y. Lantry.  
*Miss Ruth* Liechliter, Cheyenne Agency.

### MINNEHAHA RURAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

Hartford, South Dakota

Mrs. Dow Fetters, Office Librarian  
Miss Lucille Grotjohn, Bookmobile Librarian

The Minnehaha Rural Public Library is undoubtedly one of the youngest libraries in South Dakota. After much planning and several meetings the steering committee, with O. W. Voelker as Chairman, under the direction of Miss Mercedes MacKay, State Librarian, decided to have Hartford as the base for the newly organized county library. A Bookmobile was given the county on a trial basis for one year. The Sioux Valley Electric Empire Cooperation rented us their old office building for a library headquarters. They supplied us one year with free heat and electricity.

About May 16, our first personnel worker, Mr. Engelhardt, started remodeling the library building. He also built many book shelves in the back room for book storage, which may also be used for more library space as the library grows in the future. He also did most of the remodeling of the building. The library has space for approximately 10,000 books.

June 1, or sooner, Mrs. Lillian Dennis of Huron, South Dakota, came to organize the library and to get it in functioning

order. She worked many long and difficult hours to get it all set up. I am sure Mrs. Dennis would agree today that it was all well worth while.

July 5, Miss Lucille Grotjohn started to work as librarian at the headquarters in Hartford. Mrs. Dennis was librarian on the Bookmobile and Mr. Engelhardt was the driver. The Bookmobile circulation averaged around 60 per day at first. It was a new experience for the users. Every week day morning between 7:45 and 8:30 A.M. the Bookmobile leaves Hartford to serve the public. The schedule *records 60 stops* every 3 weeks for the county. This includes all the country schools and towns in Minnehaha County. We do not serve Sioux Falls and Dell Rapids, because these two communities have their *own* libraries.

The last of August Mrs. Dow Fetters was hired to be librarian here in Hartford and Lucille Grotjohn became the Bookmobile librarian.

The Bookmobile service really got a good start when school started in the fall. All the students were registered to use the Bookmobile. The students became interested in reading and told other., about it, so more people wanted to enjoy the reading of books. The children became so enthused that the parents wanted to come to the Bookmobile out of curiosity. This is the way our adult reading grew.

During the school months the circulation was 300 books per day. Considering we had to limit the number of books to one per person, it is a good circulation count.

Around the first of January great consideration started on whether we would *keep the* library, getting *petitions* signed, and who would do the job. Mrs. Noyes was hired as field director to organize and get the petitions signed. She worked many long hours because they wanted it completed by the middle of May. May 10, 1961, Mrs. Noyes accompanied by the committee took the petitions into the County Commissioners. We had approximately 5,600 signatures while 5,000 would have been sufficient. It is certain now that they will *keep the* Bookmobile and it will be financed by the county.

The number of books in the Minnehaha Rural Public Library now is about 8,000. We started with 3,300. All our books are processed at the State Library in Pierre. The total circulation of books since July 5, through the last of April is 55,727. Judging

by these figures one can plainly see that even though the Minnehaha Rural Public Library is one of the youngest libraries in South Dakota, we are definitely making progress with circulation figures.